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Press Letters

BONUS BABY

Enclosed is my contribution for the OPC Employees Christmas Bonus Fund. Having now paid for the music, perhaps I may be allowed to comment on the tune.

I am against the OPC Employees Christmas Bonus Fund. Now, lest all my future drinks be mickeyed, let me clarify my stand. I regard Christmas bonuses extracted from members of any organization as a misguided gesture. It is a holdup, staged in the name of charity, or of the Spirit of Christmas.

There are many things wrong with this system. There are obvious inequities in the distribution of tips throughout the year, and this is one attempt to reduce some of the differentials. It should convey a "thank you" for the good feelings that members have when the chef has reached a little farther out, or when the drink is a little frostier after that hot day on the streets. Instead, it is an impersonal transfer of money from our pockets into a pot and into other pockets. And — because there are gradations of performance in every organization — I presume it awards the casual worker equally with the one who breaks his neck to do something more for members.

Actually, we do have a good crew, and when Christmas time rolls around, I would much rather do something for them than for an apartment doorman whose ability to spot and snag cabs in-

creases directly in proportion to the proximity of Christmas. There have been many times when the only friendly face I have seen all day is behind the bar, in the dining room, or on the guy who took my heavy briefcase and set it gently on the floor of the checkroom, instead of slinging it in the corner. Those are the guys, come Christmas, I would like to shake by the hand and buy a drink for. But the employer-employee relationship insists that we do it this way, and so once again, here is my check. But here is a suggestion.

Could we not run an item in the budget which would produce a respectable Christmas Bonus Fund each year? Wouldn't an additional assessment on the order of 10% of the annual dues produce such a fund, and of a magnitude considerably greater than the current fund?

Wouldn't such a fund be more worthwhile, less annoying to the membership, and more satisfying to the employees than the present catch-as-catch-can arrangements? I think it might, and I would be very interested in the comments of other members along these or other lines.

Incidentally, I have assumed in all this that our salary scale is such that there is some incentive — or certainly no loss — in working for the Overseas Press Club.

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The President's Office invites any suggestions or comments on this subject.